

MY SUMMER BOARDERS. SEASON 1902.

BY WM. J. MILLS.

MY feathered boarders this season have been rather more numerous, (but none the less interesting) than has been the case in the past. My back and front yards cover 16 acres, with about 600 yards of good spring branch and several wooded knolls and glens. Five pairs of Wood Thrushes built their nests near the branch and all five families raised their brood of four each without mishap. Three pairs of Catbirds prepared to go to housekeeping but were less fortunate; their eggs being taken in an effort to minimize the annual toll exacted of my cherry trees. A pair of Scarlet Tanagers built a beautiful nest in the top of a peach tree. The set of four eggs were taken because the tanagers do considerable damage to my crop of grapes, and I didn't have a set of Scarlet Tanager eggs, so couldn't resist the temptation to add a set to my collection. A pair of Summer Tanagers built in an oak coppice close to the house, from which I secured a set of three eggs on June 8th. The vireos were here in a flock; no less than four pairs of "Red-eyes" rearing broods successfully, with the addition of three pairs of other and unidentified species of vireo. The Carolina Wren was not so numerous as usual. I have had as many as four pairs with young in different situations in the barn and other outbuildings, but this season I noted only one nest in an old paint bucket in my workshop and another in the woods in a hollow stump five feet from the ground. The aforesaid paint bucket was occupied through the winter by a pair of flying squirrels, and a pair of youngsters first saw the light therein early in February. Judging from the actions of the bird, what was taken to be a Black and white Warbler's nest (built in a small azalea bush, a foot from the ground) proved non-productive, probably on account of my approaching too closely to the nest. One pair of Indigo Buntings raised a trio of youngsters; Cardinal ditto. The

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher had a nest in a black gum. This same gum has held one nest, occasionally two, every year for the last seven years. A sparrow, not identified, built in a white oak on a horizontal limb fourteen feet from the ground and raised a set of three, while ten feet higher was a nest of a flycatcher, also unidentified, which raised a family of three.

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ALL DAY WITH THE BIRDS. May 7, 1902.

THERE is a fascination about the quest for the largest list of birds in a day which is not equalled even by the search for new species in a region which one has worked for years. The limits of time, strength, and territory possible to cover furnish the incentive for a sort of field study which is wholly out of accord with any accepted method. One cannot tarry long in any place and wait for the birds to come to him; he must search out the birds. Nor will time permit him to study the individuals without sacrificing the purpose of the day's work. A species once recorded must be put aside as finished for the day and the quest for those not yet seen carried forward vigorously. It may very well be true that this nervous activity which forbids the usual method of field work—the calm waiting for the birds to appear—makes us overlook some species; but if so, it certainly discovers to us many that would not be likely to come within our ken. It is an exhausting work, both on account of the length of the day and the energy which must be thrown into it. One may well pause to ask if it pays, or if the results justify the outlay. We think they do. One of the questions most frequently asked the writer is, "How many birds can you see in a day?", by persons who have a genuine interest in the birds and want to know what are the possibilities of a single day's study. It is a question that should have a fairly accurate answer